SNC Reference Number
(enter if previously assigned)

PROJECT SUMMARY

County: Tulare; Fresno

Applicant: Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks

Project Title: Restoration of Mountain Yellow-legged Frogs in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks (SEKI): Pre-Project Due Diligence

PROJECT GOAL

The project goals are to 1) complete CEQA requirements for the project *Preliminary Restoration of Mountain Yellow-legged Frogs* (MYLFs), *Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks* (SEKI), which is already approved through NEPA; 2) write and submit a Phase II grant proposal to the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) to help complete implementation of this preliminary restoration work; 3) help produce a very comprehensive, scientifically defensible, environmental document exploring all potential options for long-term restoration and protection of MYLFs in SEKI; and 4) write and submit an additional Phase II grant proposal to the SNC to help complete implementation of this long-term restoration work.

PROJECT SCOPE

This project will use SNC funds to hire one GS-7 lead aquatic biotech for one year to assist permanent park staff in 1) completing CEQA requirements for NEPA-approved preliminary restoration of MYLFs, 2) completing environmental documents for proposed long-term restoration of MYLFs, 3) conducting condition assessments of proposed restoration sites, and 4) writing and submitting Phase II grant proposals to SNC. These funds will allow SEKI to hire an employee that can provide 100% of his/her time on completing these actions. This will significantly enhance the ability of the SEKI wildlife and aquatic ecologists to complete these actions, as additional duties consume much of their time.

SEKI is thus seeking to complete CEQA requirements on NEPA-approved work. Although SEKI has hard annual funding that currently supports one field crew, we have the capability to simultaneously manage three crews. With funding assistance we can gain critical years of restoration toward the recovery of the rapidly declining MYLF. Although a once-common inhabitant of high elevation Sierra Nevada lakes, it has disappeared from 94% of sites in its historic range, largely due to predation by non-native trout, and very recently due to an emerging infectious disease. In 2001 SEKI began to eradicate non-native trout from eleven lakes located near reproducing frog populations, and surveys were conducted in restoration lakes to measure changes in frog abundance as an indicator of project success. By the end of 2007 we had removed more than 23,000 trout, including complete eradication from three lakes, and near-complete eradication from six other lakes. The nine lakes showed an average 14-fold increase in the densities of frogs and tadpoles detected, while one lake showed a 60-fold increase. Due to this success, SEKI recently initiated planning to expand restoration to approximately 75 additional lakes across these parks. We request $49,900, which will fund one year of work for a GS-7 lead aquatic biotech and is 45% of the total cost to implement this project; the remaining 55% is provided using NPS base funds.

The California Resources Agency is tasked with implementing the California State

Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP). The SWAP identifies the MYLF as one of three vertebrate "species at risk" in the Sierra Nevada and Cascades. In Action Q on page 331, the SWAP recommends that "Fish and Game should establish trout-free sub-basins and lakes across the high Sierra and Cascades to restore amphibians and other native species." This grant will not only improve watershed health, but also implements a critical step outlined in the SWAP. In implementing the goals of this grant, SEKI would be assisting in the achievement of state objectives already identified as a high priority.

LETTERS OF SUPPORT

A letter of support from the California Department of Fish and Game is included.

SNC PROJECT DELIVERABLES AND SCHEDULE

DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
Complete CEQA requirements for NEPA-approved Preliminary Restoration of Mountain Yellow-legged Frogs, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks	1/5/09 - 2/15/09
Write and submit Phase II grant proposal to SNC to help complete implementation of preliminary restoration work	2/15/09 – 2/27/09
Assist park staff with completion of compliance requirements for long-term restoration of MYLFs, including producing a very comprehensive, scientifically defensible, environmental document exploring all potential options for long-term restoration and protection of MYLFs	3/2/09 – 8/28/09
Write and submit six-month progress report	7/6/09 – 7/10/09
Write and submit a Phase II grant proposal to SNC to help complete implementation of long-term restoration work	9/1/09 – 9/15/09
Conduct pre-project due diligence for long-term restoration work	9/16/09 – 12/18/09
Write and submit final progress report	12/21/09 – 12/31/09

SNC PROJECT COSTS

PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES	TOTAL SNC FUNDING
Cost to government for one year of staff time for a GS-7 lead aquatic biotech	$49,900.00
SNC GRANT TOTAL	**$49,900.00**